

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Anglo-Egyptian Sudan

DATE DISTR. 28 May 1948

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SUBJECT Arrest of Mustafa Musa, President of the Workers' Affairs Association

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1. On 16 March, Mustafa Musa, the President of the Workers' Affairs Association, was reprimanded by the General Manager of the Sudan Railways for absenting himself from work. Another letter notified him that he had been suspended and that his salary had been blocked pending the decision of the disciplinary board. Musa is a superintendent in the Mechanical Transport Division, Sudan Railways, and has been employed by them for the past 20 years.
2. On 3 April, Musa was arrested on a warrant by the police following a speech he made in Atbara Mosque. He was charged, under Section 105 of the Sudan Penal Code, with making a seditious speech. he had incited the strikers to violence. The accused presented himself at Atbara police station, carrying in his pocket a copy of his alleged speech. He was then taken to a waiting plane and sent to Khartoum. Many persons were brought to Khartoum as material witnesses in the trial of Musa, which was set for 10 April 1948.
3. During the night of 6 April leaflets inciting the population to revolt were distributed in the streets of Atbara. They demanded justice for Mustafa Musa. Many such leaflets had appeared in the past year but for the first time the message was printed on a large scale. No one was arrested because the police were unable to trace the leaflets to the few printing shops in Atbara, Khartoum or Omdurman, which led to the theory that they had been imported from Egypt through Egyptian channels. A demonstration was planned for 9 April at Atbara protesting against Musa's arrest and demanding the balance of unpaid wages. This demonstration was prohibited by the police.
4. On the eve of Musa's trial the Anglo-Egyptian conflict for the Sudan came into the open when Muhammad Ahmad Mahgoub, one of Musa's lawyers, lodged a complaint in the police court against the Ashiqqah Party for publishing in their paper a statement which Mahgoub considered defamatory. Musa, fearing the pro-British inclination of Mahgoub, had requested the services of another lawyer. The Sudan Graduates General Congress succeeded in getting rid of Mahgoub, but pressure from the Ummah Party reinstated him as one of Musa's defenders. Muharrak Zarruk was the other lawyer retained for the defense. Mahgoub and Zarruk petitioned that the trial should come before the court on 10 April but Babikir Deeb, Superintendent of Police, CID, investigating the case, wanted a later date for the trial, fearing disturbances. Meanwhile, Musa was kept in seclusion but he was permitted to send a telegram to the Workers' Affairs Association advising caution and the continued solidarity of all the workers.

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Comment: The Ashiqqah Party is the party which advocates union with Egypt, and is led by Ismail Ashari. The Ummah Party is led by Sir Sayyid Abd-al-Rahman Mahdi and advocates severance of relations with Egypt and development of an independent Sudan under British guidance.

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